

Brighton Road
Black Rock
St. Michael

January 25, 2008

Dear Paul,

How are you and the family? Are things better at your new school? I just had to write to you to tell you about a surprising incident that occurred recently on my way home from school. This incident really opened my eyes about the issue of *tolerance*.

Well, here is what happened. Just as my friend and I were about to board the bus the conductor sneered at us, "I hope you all ain't no suicide bombers!" We were so stunned by this outburst that we were left speechless. No one had ever spoken to us in that manner before. We were visibly shaken by this remark but we entered the bus without responding in any way at all.

Can you believe the next day in class the guidance teacher brought up the subject of racism? It was then that I understood why the conductor had called me a suicide bomber the evening before. Since everyone believes that all Muslims are terrorists, the misguided bus conductor took one look at us and, in his ignorance, accused us. As you well know, it is against the Islamic religion to murder an innocent soul. This terrible thing called terrorism has stained the faces of Islam and today every Muslim is classified as a terrorist, not because of his nationality or because of his actions, but because of his religion.

Tolerance! This is the word the guidance counselor used and no one knows better than I do now, how much it is needed in this world today. Tolerance is needed because of difference. If we weren't all so different it would perhaps be a less problematic place but it's the differences that should be celebrated. If we were not placed here to learn about one another, to learn from one another, or to learn *with* one another, then it would be a pointless existence.

Tolerance is very essential in this world due to the varied nature of individuals and also the varied nature of cultures in the world. If we don't tolerate one another, we will certainly destroy ourselves. Just think how that conductor's comment could have stirred up trouble on that bus. We do not have to agree with or accept the views or lifestyles of others; we do not even have to like how they look, but we can and must learn to be tolerant. People view things in many different ways but no matter how convinced we are of the truth of our own beliefs we can't go around being judgemental. Many crimes world wide are committed in the name of 'truth' and of 'religion'.

We are all humans and yes, we all make mistakes and people need to tolerate that. For example, if you shoplift you aren't instantly thrown into jail. If it's your first offense it is usually tolerated and you might be sent off with a warning and a fine. Imagine yourself living in a world where everyone has the same hair colour, the same culture and not an ounce of tolerance. Without tolerance, human beings as a whole will never evolve into a higher consciousness, will never learn, and will never live in harmony. To even start to deal with all the conflict in the world we need to practice tolerance in our own

backyards. Will we be doomed to repeat acts of genocide simply because a group of people is a different colour or religion?

Paul, I hope I haven't bored you but I really had to get this off chest so that I could start healing after being called a suicide bomber. I know it's been difficult for you as a West-Indian in that English school but I can now really understand some of the experiences you have related to me. We are just two young guys whose friendship transcends racial barriers but I hope that in some way we can make a difference racial barriers but I hope that in some way we can make a difference in the world where tolerance is concerned.

Your friend forever,
Anas Vanzaria.

Charles Rowe Bridge
Salters
St. George

January 25, 2008

Hi Michelle,

As you may already know, I am very passionate about many things in life. However, I wish to discuss with you the thing that I am most passionate about – tolerance, and why it is needed in the world.

Tolerance is a very important part of our everyday lives. We as human beings need it so that we can slow down, look at the world around us and lend a helping hand to those who are less fortunate. Tolerance refers to our relationship with others. God calls us to be tolerant people. It is an expression of love that the world is so desperately in need of. It keeps us from losing our temper when someone makes us angry, it helps us to live with people who never fail to do things we just don't understand, it allows us to maintain control of our tongues when we've been insulted or embarrassed. It is a true expression of a Christ-like character.

Tolerance is needed to avoid conflict and confusion in this world. There are people in the world that may not see things the way we do. Their opinions may be quite different from ours. However upsetting this may be, we as human beings need to be patient so as to avoid any conflicts which may arise as a result of these differences. There are people in the world we may not approve of, for example, prostitutes and homosexuals. Although we may disapprove of their lifestyles we need to be tolerant so that hate crimes may be avoided. Many of the crimes committed in the world today are the result of people's lack of tolerance. If everyone tried to be a little more patient, understanding, loving, caring, and tolerant, the world would be a much better and safer place.

The practice of tolerance can play an important role in preventing acts of racism and discrimination. People who are tolerant realize that everyone in the world is not exactly like them. Because they are tolerant they can accept this fact and can then as a result freely show love and acceptance of those who are different. They do not discriminate, regardless of race, class, religion, lifestyle or culture. A world full of tolerance is a world free of discrimination and segregation.

But intolerance strikes even closer to us as young people. When we look around what we see in our generation is a lack of tolerance for older people. We young people go about living our lives not realizing that, if we are fortunate, we too will some day become old. We must realize that we need to be tolerant of old people who are not able to do the things they were once able to do. Once our generation realizes that one day we too will need help, love, care and affection we will not hesitate to give these things to the older people in our society.

Regardless of age, culture, language or race, all humans should embrace tolerance. God calls us to be patient people. In fact, in the Bible most of the verses on

patience and tolerance refer to our relationships with others. Tolerance is an expression of love and it is needed as a means of control when people upset us. Tolerance helps to build character and is a very reliable way of reducing conflict, confusion and crime. The sooner we realize how important tolerance is to the world, the sooner we can make it a better place for all of us.

Well, those are my views on tolerance, Michelle. I told you I am passionate about it. If you have any views on this topic please write soon and let me hear them. Looking forward to summer and spending time with you.

Love always,
Melinda